

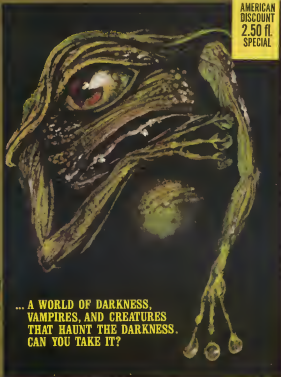


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CREEPY

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FIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN...LEND ME YOUR WARPED LITTLE MINDS AND I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE OLD ROMAN EMPIRE FOR SOME **HYSTERICAL HISTORY**...BACK TO THE BLOODY ARENAS WHERE A MAN'S LIFE DEPENDS ON THE SIMPLE GESTURE OF THUMBS UP OR...

THUMBS DOWN!

WITH A ROAR OF SURPRISE AND EXCITEMENT, THE CROWD IN THE COLISEUM OF THE ROMAN CITY OF MITHRAS WAS ON ITS FEET. THE FAVORED GLADIATOR HAD FALLEN AND AN AIR OF BLOOD AND DEATH SWEEPED THE ARENA!

YOUR MAN, AGLIO, HAS FOUGHT WELL, BRACCHUS... SHALL I LET HIM LIVE?

AS GAMES MASTER OF THE ARENA, I'VE LEARNED ONE VERY IMPORTANT LESSON, YOUR HIGHNESS...

AL
WILLIAMSON



AS THE CROWD STREAMED FROM THE ARENA AT THE GAMES' END, BRACCHUS RUSHED HAPPILY BELOW TO THE GLADIATORS' ROOMS, AS DRUNK WITH GREED AND POWER AS WITH THE STRONG RED WINE HE HAD SWILLED ALL AFTERNOON...

WELL FOUGHT, CASSIUS! YOU'VE MADE YOURSELF CHAMPION AND ME A RICH MAN! EVERY FOOL IN THE CITY WAS BETTING ON AGLIO.

BUT YOU TOLD AGLIO HE COULD HAVE HIS FREEDOM IF HE LET ME WIN!

AND SO HE DOES! WHO CAN BE FREER THAN A DEAD MAN.

WHAT ABOUT ME, BRACCHUS? WILL YOU SOON GRANT ME SUCH FREEDOM?

NOT YOU, CASSIUS! YOU SHARE MY SECRET. HAVE MY GRATITUDE. YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF!



SO BRACCHUS AND HIS
ARENA PROSPERED...
GROWING DAILY WITH
THE INCREASED TRADE
IN DEATH AND
BRUTALITY...



SHAME! THE
PEOPLE STARVE
AND DIE IN THE STREETS
AND SUPPLY SHIPS BRING
ONLY ANIMALS AND SAND
FOR THE ARENA!
SHAME, BRACCHUS!

SHUT UP,
OLD FOOL!
YOU CAN'T TALK
THAT WAY
TO ME!



CONCERNED ABOUT FOOD,
ENP? WELL, TOMORROW YOU
CAN HELP FEED
SOME STARVING
LIONS--WITH
YOUR FLESH!



BUT ALL BRACCHUS'S PROBLEMS WERE
NOT SO SIMPLE OR SO EASILY SOLVED...



A GLADIATOR'S
LIFE IS A HARD
ONE, BRACCHUS...
EVEN IN YOUR FIXED
CONTESTS! I WANT
TO BE MADE
A FREE MAN!

THE GAMES ARE
IMPORTANT TO THE
PEOPLE...YOU'D BE
TORN APART IF WORD
REACHED THEM.
YOUR CONTESTS
ARE DISHONEST!



A GOOD
POINT, WELL
ARGUED, CABBAGE!
I'LL SEE WHAT
I CAN DO!



FELLOW CITIZENS!
I WISH TO ANNOUNCE
A CHANGE IN TODAY'S
MATCHES! A CHANGE
WHICH I KNOW WILL
HEIGHTEN YOUR
PLEASURE!

OUR CHAMPION GLADIATOR,
CASSIUS, WAS TO HAVE DONE
BATTLE WITH THEBUS THE
GREEK...INSTEAD, I HAVE
ARRANGED FOR HIM TO
MEET AN INTERESTING
NEW CHALLENGER--



--JUST ARRIVED
FROM SPAIN!

BRACCHUS!
NO!



GAAAAAA!

MARVELOUS,
BRACCHUS! WHAT
A SPECTACLE!
TOMORROW IS THE
FEAST OF APOLLO.
HOW CAN YOU
HOPE TO TOP
THIS?

I BELIEVE YOUR HIGHNESS
HAS RECENTLY ACQUIRED
A NEW BATCH OF
CHRISTIANS...BY A
STRANGE COINCIDENCE,
I HAVE RECENTLY AC-
QUIRED A NEW BATCH OF
LIONS.. AND TIGERS!



NIGHT BROUGHT NO DESIRE FOR SLEEP TO BRACCHUS... IT WAS A TIME FOR CELEBRATION! THE FEAST OF APOLLO WOULD BRING THE BIGGEST CROWDS OF THE YEAR AND HE COULD NOT RESIST A LAST JUBILANT REVIEW TO MAKE SURE HIS DOMAIN WAS IN READINESS...

CHEER UP, BEASTS! TONIGHT I DINED WITH THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR! TOMORROW... YOU'VE GONNA FATTER ON CHRISSEANS!

HERE! YOU NEED THIS MORAN ME! YOU HEAR DOWN THERE GONNA BE FOOD FOR THE BIG CATS... GONNA MAKE ME A BIG SUCCESS!

THIS IS ALL MINE! MAKIN' ME RICH... FAMOUS... POWERFUL!

WAIT! WHOZAT? WHAT'RE YOU DOWN HERE? NO-BODY'S ALLOWED HERE TILL TOMORROW! GET OUT OF MY ARENA!

CLINK! CLANG!

THAT NOISE SOUNDS LIKE ANIMALS BEING RELEASED FROM THEIR CAGES!

GROWRRRRR!

W-WO! THEY'LL
BE LOOSE HERE
IN THE ARENA
WITH ME!



HELP! PLEASE!
I DON'T CARE
WHO YOU ARE!
HELP ME!



YOU CAN
SAVE ME! PULL
ME UP ON THE
TAPESTRY! PLEASE!
SAVE ME!
I'LL GIVE YOU
ANYTHING
JUST--



G-CASSIUS!
P-PLEASE!



EVEN AS A WHIRLWIND OF HOT BREATH, FANGS AND CLAWS
SPRAWLED HIM INTO THE ARENA SAND, BRACCHUS'S EYES LOOKED
PLEADINGLY UP AT THE LAST SIGHT THEY WOULD EVER SEE...THE
HAND FROM THE GRAVE FORMING THE HOPELESS GESTURE MORE
FAMILIAR TO HIM THAN THE DEATH CRY WHICH EVEN NOW BURST
FROM HIS MOUTH!

YAHHHHHH!



HEH, HEH! THAT ONE'S A REAL
SCREAM! HOPE ALL YOU CATS
DUG IT...WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT
WHEN YOU GO ROAMIN' AROUND
THE ARENA AT NIGHT? YOU'RE
BOUND TO BUMP INTO
SOMEONE
WHO'S ALL
THUMBS
DOWN!





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its movements
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world. It is interesting how a
slightly damp bit of meat will
produce these
bravely possible and yet it is certainly
not."



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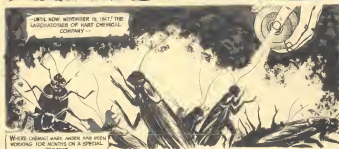
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IT'S DISAPPEARED! BUT
WHERE? WHERE AM I?



HELP!
HELP!

MAYBE I CAN
GET IT BACK.



SOUNDS LIKE IT'S
COMING FROM
UP THERE!

HELP!
PLEASE,
HELP!



NOW'S MY CHANCE TO
GET AWAY BUT--



IT'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL
I FIND OUT WHO COULD KNOW
ME IN THIS NIGHTMARE
WORLD!

MARK, FOR GOD'S
SAKE, HELP ME, MARK!





HOW DID YOU
KNOW THIS SPRAY
WOULD KILL THEM?



...AND HOW DID YOU
KNOW MY NAME?

WE'VE BEEN WATCHING
--AND EXPECTING YOU. WE
USED THE ELEVATOR AS A
BRIDGE BETWEEN OUR WORLD
AND YOURS. I WAS COMING
TO MEET YOU WHEN THEY
ATTACKED.



BUT WHY?

THAT SPRAY YOU
DEVELOPED IS THE ONLY
WEAPON THAT CAN SAVE
US. THE FEW OF US THAT
ARE LEFT ARE IN THAT
CASTLE.



DOES ANYONE ELSE IN
THE WORLD KNOWS THE
FORMULA?

NO, IT'S IN
MY HEAD, BUT
LOOK OUT!

KILL THEM! WE'VE GOT TO GET
INTO THE CASTLE! WE MUST
HAVE THAT FORMULA TO
KILL THE OTHER INSECTS!



HELP AWW, FOOLS! WE MUST HAVE THAT FORMULA! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO KILL THE OTHER INSECTS!

OTHER INSECTS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



GOOD LORD! YOU'RE --

SEIZE HIM GUARDS!



THAT WON'T DO YOU MUCH GOOD NOW. I USED THE LAST OF IT ON THE WASPS, AND I'LL NEVER TELL YOU THE FORMULA!

WELL YOU WON'T HAVE TO TELL US --



WE WILL ABSORB THE FORMULA ALONG WITH THE REST OF YOUR BRAIN WITH OUR FEEDER TUBES



IT'S PAINFUL TO BE EATEN ALIVE -- BUT NECESSARY. ONLY **WE** WILL HAVE THE FORMULA, AND **NOBODY** WILL BE ABLE TO STOP US FROM TAKING OVER YOUR WORLD.

THIS CAN MAY SAVE ME YET!



HURRY! THE LEADER COMES! HIS FEAST MUST BE PREPARED!





I'M BACK! IT WAS ALL SO STRANGE LIKE A NIGHTMARE! — AND YET IT MUST HAVE BEEN REAL.



GO RIGHT IN, MR. ANDER. HE'S EXPECTING YOU.

GOOD! THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE!

MR. HART

MISS COREY



MR. HART! THE FORMULA!

I KNOW, MARK. MISS COREY, WOULD YOU COME IN NOW, PLEASE.

YES, LEADER!



"LEADER?" — IT'S YOU!

OF COURSE, MARK. WHY DO YOU THINK I WAS SO ANXIOUS FOR YOU TO DEVELOP THAT FORMULA? NOW YOUR WORK IS DONE!



AAAYUGH!

—AND OURS IS JUST BEGINNING!

END

THE INTER-GALACTIC SPACESHIP MOVED SILENTLY AND INCREDIBLY SWIFTLY TOWARD THE GREEN WORLD! NEVER HAD ANY OF THE FOUR MEN ABOARD SEEN A PLANET THAT PHYSICALLY SEEMED SO SIMILAR TO THEIR NATIVE EARTH.

WITH A SENSE OF EXPECTANCY, THE CREW PREPARED FOR THE LANDING! BECAUSE OF THE EARTH-LIKE ATMOSPHERE, THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO EXPLORE THE AREA WITHOUT CUMBERSOME EQUIPMENT.

THE INSTRUMENTS PROMISED THEY'D BE ABLE TO BREATHE REAL OXYGEN, TO SMELL GRASS AND FLOWERS AND TO FEEL THE WARM SUN!



HEY, KIDDIES, I'VE GOT AN OUTER SPACE STORY FOR YOU! IT'S JUST OUT OF THE WORLD! PULL UP A CHAIR, PUT ON YOUR SPACE HELMETS AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHETHER OUR POOR SPACEMEN ARE GOING TO COPE WITH...

BEAUTY OR THE BEAST!

COMMANDER JACK CLEMENT AND LT. THOMAS TUCKER WATCHED AS MATES CHRIS COPAS AND JAMES REEVES PREPARED FOR THE EXPLORATORY CHECK OF TRITON-3, AN AIR OF FRIVOLOUSITY FILLED THE SHIP, AS IT USUALLY DID WHEN THE MEN WERE RETURNING HOME TO EARTH!

DON'T LET COPAS DO ANY TRADING WITH THE NATIVES! THEY'LL ROB HIM DEAD, DUMB AND BLIND

AND STAY AWAY FROM TOURIST TRAPS! YOU KNOW HOW PRICES SHOOT UP AS SOON AS ONE OF *YOU* GUYS WALKS IN!

LOOK, IF I CAN KEEP COPAS FROM BUYING POSTCARDS, I'LL CONSIDER MYSELF SUCCESSFUL.



CLEMENT AND TUCKER BENT FORWARD OVER THE RADIO RECEPTOR, EAGERLY DEVOURING EVERY WORD OF THE TEAM'S REPORT.



IT'S LIKE WALKING THROUGH A BOTANICAL GARDEN... BUT THE FLOWERS ARE BIGGER. THEIR COLORS MORE VIVID!

REEVES' VOICE CONTINUED TO DESCRIBE THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE...UNTIL...

THERE'S A BRILLIANT RAINBOW TO THE NORTH. IT'S SO BRIGHT IT HURTS MY EYES! AND THOSE TREES ARE... **GOOD LORD!!!** COMAS, HELP ME... **HELP ME!** **EEE-YANHH!**



TUCKER, SOMEONE'S GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED! IF I'M NOT BACK BY 1800 HOURS, RETURN TO THE SATELLITE WITHOUT US.



Y-YES, SIR!



ONCE ON THE SURFACE, A TRANQUILITY FILLED THE EARTHMAN.

IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FEEL ANY THREAT OF DANGER IN A SETTING LIKE **THIS!**

BUT THEN...

NO!

COMMANDER! WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



CLEMENT STOOD THERE IN DESPAIR... HIS HANDS HOPELESSLY AT HIS SIDE AS HE STARED AT THE MUTILATED BODIES OF HIS FRIENDS.

WHAT SORT OF A MONSTER...COULD HAVE DONE **THIS?**



CLEMENT KNELT BESIDE HIS FRIENDS, FIGHTING TO HOLD BACK THE TEARS

ONLY A BEAST OUT OF HELL IS CAPABLE OF THIS! AND THOSE GUYS WERE DESCRIBING THIS PLACE AS IF IT WERE THE GARDEN OF EDEN!

FURTHER EXPLORATION UNNECESSARY! TRITON-3 SHALL BE CLASSIFIED AS HOSTILE... OFF-LIMITS FOR EARTH SHIPS



HALFWAY BACK TO THE SHIP, HE HEARD THE SOUND OF MOVEMENT BEHIND HIM. CLEMENT SPUN, HIS FINGER TIGHTLY GRIPPING THE TRIGGER OF HIS WEAPON.

THE WOMAN SMILED AND STEPPED FORWARD, HOLDING HER HANDS OUT TOWARD THE EARTHMAN.



WELL, HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT!

HER DELICATE, GRACEFUL FEATURES DAZZLED HIM! HE SLOWLY LOWERED HIS WEAPON AND PLACED IT IN HIS HOLSTER.

OWLP... HELLO!



WHAT! DON'T -- DON'T COME ANY CLOSER, P-PLEASE!



THE GIRL EMBRACED THE SPACEMAN/ AND FOR AN INSTANT, CLEMENT WAS BACK ON EARTH, ONCE MORE HOLDING A HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEART IN HIS ARMS.

OH, I LOVE YOU, LAURA! HOW I LOVE YOU!

CLEMENT PULLED HIMSELF OUT OF THE GIRL'S GRIP... AND TEARS FILLED HER EYES.

I'VE GOT TO GO! ..I'VE GOT TO RETURN TO MY SHIP! G-GOOD-BYE!

ALL THE WAY BACK TO HIS SHIP, CLEMENT WAS HAUNTED BY THE GIRL'S BEAUTY.

SHE WAS THE LOVELIEST, SOFTEST, GIRL I EVER HELD!

SHE STOOD THERE WATCHING HIM... CLEMENT LOOKED INTO HER EYES AGAIN, AND HE WAS LOST!

ALL RIGHT! COME ABOARD! IT'S NOT SAFE FOR YOU DOWN THERE! NOT WITH THAT MONSTER SO NEAR-BY!

As COMMANDER CLEMENT WAS ABOUT TO BOARD HIS SHIP, HE SENSED THE PRESENCE OF A VISITOR...

YOU! YOU FOLLOWED ALL THE WAY BACK HERE... DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--- I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH ME! I CAN'T!

COMMANDER, THAT GIRL! YOU KNOW IT'S A COURT MARTIAL TO ANYONE WHO BRINGS A NATIVE ABOARD AN EXPLORATORY VESSEL! GET HER OUT! QUICK!

SHUT UP, TUCKER! JUST GET BACK TO YOUR POST AND SHUT UP!

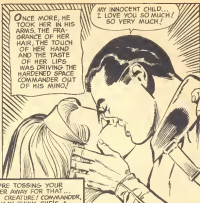
FOR COMMANDER CLEMENT, THERE WAS JUST ONE POSSIBLE DECISION TO MAKE---AND HE HAD NOW MADE IT... THE GIRL WAS RETURNING EARTH WITH HIM.



THIS IS YOUR PLACE, MY DARLING. YOU'LL STAY HERE UNTIL WE'RE HOME!

ONCE MORE, HE TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS. THE FRAGRANCE OF HER HAIR, THE TOUCH OF HER HAND AND THE TASTE OF HER LIPS WAS DRIVING THE HARDENED SPACE COMMANDER OUT OF HIS MIND!

MY INNOCENT CHILD... I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! SO VERY MUCH!



AND SO THE COMMANDER MADE ANOTHER DECISION...

PREPARE THE SHIP FOR IMMEDIATE TAKE-OFF! WE'RE GOING BACK TO EARTH.



WHAT? COMMANDER, YOU'VE GONE INSANE!

YOU'RE TOSSING YOUR CAREER AWAY FOR THAT... THAT CREATURE! COMMANDER, YOU MAY THINK SHE'S A WOMAN, BUT IT'S NOT! THAT THING IN THE NEXT ROOM IS AN ALIEN! MAYBE EVEN CAPABLE OF DESTROYING THIS SPACE-SHIP!

NONSENSE! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, AND I LOVE HER. SHE'S NO MORE DANGEROUS THAN MY AUNT MAY.

AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOME ACADEMIC HISTORY, COMMANDER? REMEMBER THE VAMPIRE WOMEN ON SATURN'S FOURTH MOON?

THEY, TOO, TOOK THE SHAPE OF LUSCIOUS, DESIRABLE WOMEN... BUT THEY WEREN'T... THEY WERE KILLER VAMPIRES! THEY MURDERED A CREW OF FIFTEEN MEN... UNSUSPECTING LOVESTRUCK SPACE-TRAVELERS... JUST LIKE YOU!



THERE WAS NO REASONING WITH THE SPACE-COMMANDER, SO LT. TUCKER TOOK MATTERS IN HIS OWN HANDS.

KX-9C
CTIONS
ROL



MOMENTS LATER, CLEMENT REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND FOUND HIMSELF ALONE IN AN EMPTY SPACESHIP.

THAT FOOL AND HIS CRAZY THEORIES! I'VE GOT TO FIND TUCKER BEFORE HE DOES SOMETHING NUTTY.



THE GIRL IGNORED THE MUTILATED BODY OF TUCKER. INSTEAD, SHE CLUNG TIGHTLY TO THE CONFUSED SPACE COMMANDER.

HIS BRAIN WAS FROZEN WITH FEAR AS TUCKER'S WARNING CAME BACK! AND HE KNEW HE COULD NO LONGER PASS IT OFF!

"THEY TOOK THE SHAPE OF LUSCIOUS, DESIRABLE WOMEN... BUT THEY WEREN'T! THEY MURDERED A CREW OF 15 MEN... UNSUSPECTING, LOVESTRUCK SPACE-TRAVELLERS, JUST LIKE YOU!"



O-DARLING! TELL ME YOU DIDN'T DO THIS! NOT YOU! NOT YOU!

THE GIRL THREW HERSELF AT HIS FEET. SHE CLUNG TENACIOUSLY FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS AND THEN HE BROKE FREE.

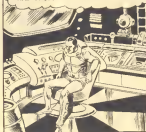
I'M SORRY! BUT I UNDERSTAND NOW! -CHOKE- AND I'M **NOT** GOING TO BE YOUR NEXT VICTIM!



AND SO THE LONELY COMMANDER RETURNED TO HIS SHIP...

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SHE TURNED ON ME, TOO! TUCKER WAS RIGHT! IT WAS A CREATURE... NOT A WOMAN!

BUT IT WAS A WOMAN THAT TORMENTED CLEMENT'S DREAM THAT NIGHT...



NO, I CAN'T... I WON'T LEAVE HER HERE! EVEN IF SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF THE OTHERS, SHE WON'T HARM ME!



IN SECONDS, CLEMENT WAS ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE. SUDDENLY, A BLOOD-CHILLING SCREAM FILLED THE AIR... A WOMAN'S SCREAM!

OH MY GOD! THAT'S HER VOICE! SHE'S BEING ATTACKED!



EE-YAH!

GOOD LORD! I'M TOO LATE! IT'S DESTROYED HER TOO! JUST LIKE... THE OTHERS!



AND AS CLEMENT CLUTCHED THE MUTILATED BODY OF HIS INNOCENT BELOVED ONE, HE LOOKED UP TO SEE A HIDEOUS SIGHT CLOSING IN ON HIM.

WHA---NO!
NO! STAY BACK! STAY BACK!



HEE, HEE, HEE! YES, POOR CLEMENT KNEW WHAT THE FEMALE SPECIES OF THAT WORLD LOOKED LIKE! BUT IT WAS THE MALE SPECIE THAT HE REALLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN WORRYING ABOUT! I MEAN AFTER ALL, HOW'D YOU LIKE YOUR WIFE TRYING TO RUN OFF WITH SOME GUY FROM ANOTHER PLANET? WOULD YOU TAKE IT LAYING DOWN? HMMMM? HEE, HEE, HEE, HEE!



ALL YOU HORROR-ADDICTS GOT YOUR GLASSES READY SO YOU CAN DRINK YOUR FILL? FOR THIS MONTH'S CREEPY CLASSIC, WE DRAW UPON THE WEIRD WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE AS THIS MASTER OF THE MACABRE ALLOWS US TO SIP A SAMPLE OF TERROR FROM...

The Cask of Amontillado!



ART BY REED CRANDALL/ADAPTED BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

THE THOUSAND INJURIES OF FORTUNATO I HAD BORNE AS I BEST COULD, BUT WHEN HE VENTURED UPON RESULT I KNEW REVENGE...

YOU GET A FINE TABLE, MONTRESOR! IT ALMOST MAKES UP FOR THE TERRIBLE POETRY YOU WRITE!



YIS POETRY IS NOT THAT BAD... AND HIS WINE IS EXCELLENT!

AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A JUDGE OF WINE, LUCKLESS! THIS IS A FINE WINE, TERRIBLY BOTTLED! LEAVE THE JUDGMENT OF WINE AND POETRY TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS... ME!



PERHAPS YOUR POETRY WOULD BE PRETTIER, MONTRESOR, IF YOU WERE A PRETTIER FELLOW... BUT THEN THE MONTRESORS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FAMED FOR THEIR HOMEINESS! EVEN YOUR MOTHER WAS --

REALLY, FORTUNATO! WE'RE COUNT MONTRESOR'S GUESTS!



NEITHER, BY WORD NOR DEED DID I GIVE FORTUNATO CAUSE TO DOUBT MY GOOD WILL, BUT CONTINUED TO SMILE IN HIS FACE... AND HE DID NOT PERCEIVE MY SMILE NOW WAS AT THE THOUGHT OF HIS DESTRUCTION!

HE CAN STAND THE JOKING... EH, MONTRESOR? AFTER ALL I DO PUBLISH HIS SILLY POEMS!



THOUGH A MAN TO BE RESPECTED AND EVEN FEARED, HE HAD A WEAK POINT... HE PRIDED HIMSELF ON BEING A CONNOISSEUR OF WINE...

AH! THESE ORDINARY WINES... IF ONLY IT WERE AMONTILLADO! THERE'S A TASTE A MAN COULD DIE FOR!



ABOUT DUSK, ONE EVENING DURING THE SUPREME MADNESS OF THE CARNIVAL SEASON, I ENCOUNTERED MY FRIEND, WHO HAD BEEN DRINKING MUCH...

FORTUNATE! WHAT LUCK! TODAY I RECEIVED A CASK OF WHAT PRESSES FOR **AMONTILLADO**, BUT I HAVE MY DOUBTS!

AMONTILLADO?
A CASK? IMPOSSIBLE!
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE CARNIVAL!

I WAS SILLY ENOUGH TO PAY THE FULL PRICE WITHOUT EXPERT ADVICE... I'M ON MY WAY TO GET LUCHRESI'S OPINION!

LUCHRESI CANNOT TELL **AMONTILLADO** FROM SHERRY! COME! LEAD ME TO YOUR VAULTS! **AMONTILLADO!**



MY FRIEND, I DO NOT WISH TO IMPOSE UPON YOUR GOOD NATURE. LUCHRESI CAN--

LUCHRESI CANNOT! LEAD ME TO THE **AMONTILLADO**!

BUT, MY FRIEND, I PERCEIVE YOU HAVE A COLD. THE VAULTS ARE INSUFFERABLY DAMP!

THE COLD IS NOTHING! **AMONTILLADO!**

THE SERVANTS WERE GONE, ABSCONDED TO MAKE MERRY IN HONOR OF THE TIME. I HAD TOLD THEM I WOULD NOT RETURN BEFORE MORNING...

YOU'LL NEED THIS! THE WAY IS DARK AND SLIPPERY... TAKE CARE AS YOU FOLLOW ME!





IT'S NOTHING! I
SHALL NOT DIE
OF A COUGH!

TRUE... **TRUE!** HERE...
A DRAUGHT OF THIS
MEDOC WILL DEFEND US
FROM THE DAMPS!

I DRINK TO THE
BURIED THAT REPOSE
AROUND US!

AND I TO YOUR...
LONG LIFE!

THE WINE SPARKLED IN HIS EYES
AND THE BELLS ON HIS FOOL'S
COSTUME JINGLED. WE HAD
PASSED INTO THE INMOST
RECESSES OF THE CATACOMBS.

WE ARE BELOW THE
RIVER! SEE THE TRICKLES
OF WATER FORCING THEIR
WAY THROUGH THE STONES.
THE NITRATE HANGS LIKE
MOSS... WE SHOULD GO
BACK! YOUR COUGH--

IT IS NOTHING! ON TO THE
AMONTILLADO! BUT FIRST,
ANOTHER DRAUGHT OF THE
MEDOC...

THESE VAULTS
ARE EXTENSIVE!

THE MONTRESORS WERE A
GREAT, NUMEROUS
FAMILY... AND **PROUD!**

WE PASSED THROUGH A RANGE OF LOW
ARCHES, ARRIVING AT A DEEP CRYPT IN WHICH
THE FOUL AIR CAUSED OUR CANDLES TO GLOW
RATHER THAN FLAME...

WE'VE REACHED
A DEAD END!

GO ON, FORTUNATO!
WITHIN THAT NICHE IS
THE AMONTILLADO!



MONTRESOR!
IT'S EMPTY!
WHERE'S THE...

AMONTILLADO?



IT WAS THE WORK OF BUT A FEW SECONDS TO
SECURE HIM TO THE WALL... HE WAS MUCH TOO
ASTONISHED TO RESIST!

M-MONTRESOR...

NEAR THE NICHE WAS A PILE OF
BONES... THROWING THEM ASIDE, I
SOON UNCOVERED A QUANTITY OF
BUILDING STONE AND MORTAR... EXACTLY
AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY PLACED THEM!



MONTRESOR,
PLEASE!

PASS YOUR HAND OVER THE
WALL THE NITRATE AND MOSS
IS VERY DAMP! LET ME **IMPROVE**
YOU ONCE MORE TO RETURN.
NOT THEN I'M AFRAID I
MUST LEAVE YOU!

WITH THESE MATERIALS AND THE
AID OF MY TROWEL, I BEGAN
VIGOROUSLY TO WALL UP THE
ENTRANCE OF THE NICHE!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS! MONTRESOR
- PLEASE DON'T! ANYTHING I
MAY HAVE SAID... DONE...
PLEASE! Y-YOU MUSTN'T...
PLEASE, PLEASE!

WAIT! WAIT! HA! NOW I
UNDERSTAND... HA, HA! A VERY
GOOD JOKE! INDEED... HEE,
HEE! AN EXCELLENT JEST!
WE'LL HAVE MANY A LAUGH
ABOUT IT OVER OUR WINE...
HA, HA!

THE
AMONTILLADO!



HEE, HEE! HA, HA! YES, THE AMONTILLADO! BUT IS IT NOT GETTING LATE? MY WIFE AND THE OTHERS WILL BE WAITING FOR US... LET US BE GONE!



YES, LET US BE GONE!



FOR THE
LOVE
OF
GOD,
MONTRESOR!

YES, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD,
IN PLACE REQUIESCAT,
FORTUNATO, **REST
IN PEACE!**

AGAINST THE MASOERY I
ERECTED A RAMPART OF BONES...
NOW, SAVE FOR MY VISITS, FOR
HALF A CENTURY NO MORTAL
HAS DISTURBED THEM!



WAIT! WHAT'S THAT NOISE? WATER! FROM THE RIVER ABOVE! ALL THESE YEARS LEAKING INTO THE NICHE... FILLING UP.. BUILDING PRESSURE.



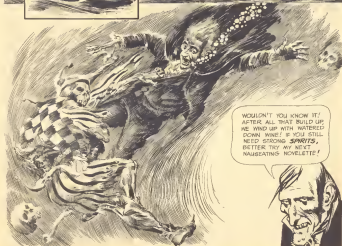
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! AT ANY MOMENT THAT WALL COULD -- BURST!



THE STEPS! I CAN STILL GET OUT BEFORE THE CRYPT IS COMPLETELY FLOODED!



NO! MY LEGS! CAUGHT ON SOMETHING! PULLING ME UNDER! NOOOOOOOOOO!



WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT! AFTER ALL THAT BUILD UP, WE WIND UP WITH WATERED DOWN WINE! IF YOU STILL NEED STRONG *SPIRITS*, BETTER TRY MY NEXT NAUSEATING NOVELETTE!



AH, TIME FOR ANOTHER CREEPY CLASSIC... MACABRE MASTERPIECES WROUGHT BY ACKNOWLEDGED ARTISTS OF THE COLD CHILL! THIS FEAR-FABLE IS OUR VERSION OF A SPINE-TINGLER BY AMBROSE BIERCE... HE CALLED IT...

The DAMNED THING!

BY THE LIGHT OF A TALLOW CANDLE, A MAN WAS READING SOMETHING WRITTEN IN A BOOK, BESIDES THE READER, EIGHT OTHER MEN WERE PRESENT... ONE LAY ON THE TABLE, PARTLY COVERED BY A SHEET, HIS ARMS AT HIS SIDES. HE WAS DEAD...



THIS DIARY... ITS ENTRIES ARE... **INCREDIBLE!** I WANTED TO RE-READ IT BEFORE INCORPORATING THE MATERIAL INTO MY TESTIMONY.



HUGH MORGAN'S DIARY HAD YOUR TESTIMONY? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE OF THIS INQUEST? YOU ADMIT IT'S INCREDIBLE...



THAT'S NOTHING TO YOU, CORNER, IF I ALSO SWEAR UNDER OATH IT'S **TRUE!**



I KNOW YOU RESENT SOMEONE FROM THE CITY INTERFERING WITH YOUR HANDLING OF THESE THINGS, BUT THE ENTRIES IN THE DECEASED'S DIARY WILL CLARIFY MY OWN STORY! THE FIRST WAS WRITTEN ALMOST TWO MONTHS AGO...

"WORKING NEAR THE CABIN, I NOTICED STRANGE BEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF MY DOG... HE WOULD RUN IN A HALF-CIRCLE, KEEPING HIS HEAD TURNED TO CENTER, THEN HE WOULD STAND STILL, BARKING FURIOUSLY..."



BLUE! WHAT'S THE MATTER, BOY?

"CAN A DOG SEE WITH HIS NOSE? DO ODORS IMPRESS SOME CEREBRAL CENTER WITH IMAGES OF THE THING THAT EMITTED THEM?..." **SUDDENLY...**

"SEPT. 2—BLUE WILL NOT GO INTO THE WOODS AND SEEMS FRIGHTENED OUTSIDE THE CABIN—I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THIS EITHER, AFTER LAST NIGHT..."



THE STARS ALONG THE RIDGE... THEY'RE BEING BLOTTED OUT! AS THOUGH SOMETHING PASSED BETWEEN ME AND THEM! B-BUT THERE'S NOTHING...

"I SWEAR I DID NOT SLEEP! I HARDLY SLEEP AT ALL NOW... **YET...**"



TRACKS! B-BUT I SAW NOTHING! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! I MUST BE GOING **MAD!!**



BLUE!

"SEPT. 17-- IT'S BEEN HERE AGAIN! I FIND EVIDENCE OF ITS PRESENCE EVERY DAY... LAST NIGHT I WATCHED AGAIN FROM COVER..."



CLOSE TO DAWN... HAVEN'T SEEN A THING!

WHAT'S THIS JUMBO-JUMBO, HARKER? MORGAN MUST HAVE BEEN SOFT IN THE HEAD FROM LYING OUT HERE ALONE... WHY DO THE ENTRIES SKIP AROUND SO MUCH?



THE OTHER PAGES HAVE BEEN TORN OUT BY SOMEONE—OR *SOMETHING*! BUT YOU'RE RIGHT... MORGAN DID FEAR FOR HIS SANITY, THAT'S WHY HE SENT FOR ME! TO GET HIS MIND OCCUPIED, I SUGGESTED WE GO HUNTING...



"WE WERE LOOKING FOR QUAIL, EACH WITH A SHOTGUN... OUR TRAIL TOOK US THROUGH A FIELD OF WILD OATS..."

COME NOW, MORGAN, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FILL UP A DEER WITH QUAIL-SHOT, ARE YOU?

BLAST IT! SOMETHING SCARED THE BIRDS... WE MUST HAVE STARTED A DEER!

N-NO...



THE OATS! LOOK AT THE WILD OATS!



"IT WAS AS IF A STREAK OF WIND NOT ONLY SENT THE OATS, BUT PRESSED IT DOWN—CRUSHED IT SO IT DID NOT RISE! AND THIS MOVEMENT WAS COMING DIRECTLY TOWARD US!"

THAT DAMNED THING!!

WHAT IS IT? WHAT THE DEVIL IS IT?

HER! BLOW!



"BEFORE THE SMOKE OF THE BLAST CLEARED AWAY I HEARD A LOUD SAVAGE CRY--LIKE A WILD ANIMAL'S SCREAM! AT THE SAME INSTANT I WAS THROWN VIOLENTLY TO THE GROUND BY THE IMPACT OF SOMETHING UNSEEN IN THE SMOKE..."



"HEAVEN SPARE ME FROM ANOTHER SIGHT LIKE THAT! AT A DISTANCE OF LESS THAN 20 YARDS, MY FRIEND'S WHOLE BODY WAS IN VIOLENT MOVEMENT AS THOUGH IN THE GRIP OF SOME TERRIBLE BEAST!... WITH EACH SHIFT IN POSITION SOME PART OF HIS BODY WOULD DISAPPEAR... AS THOUGH **BLOTTED OUT!**"



"ALL THIS MUST HAVE OCCURRED WITHIN A FEW SECONDS, BUT BEFORE I COULD REACH MORGAN, HE WAS DOWN--**FOREVER!** ALL WAS TERRIBLY QUIET... EVEN THE WILD CATS HAD STOPPED MOVING..."



HARKER! ARE YOU TRYING TO WASTE THE JURY'S TIME AND MINE? YOUR STORY'S AS MAD AS MORGAN'S DIARY!



WE ALL KNOW YOU'RE A WRITER FROM THE BIG CITY, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL US WHOPPERS LIKE THAT!

IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, LET THE JURY LOOK AT *THIS*!

WHOD-BEE? RIPPED TO SHREDS! MAYBE NOW YOU'LL HEAR

AIN'T HARDLY A THROAT LEFT!

WE OUT! THERE'S ONE ENTRY IN THE DIARY I HAVEN'T READ! WRITTEN THE NIGHT BEFORE HE AND I WENT HUNTING...

"OCT. 7--I HAVE THE SOLUTION... IT CAME TO ME LAST NIGHT--**TERRIBLY** SIMPLE! AT EITHER END OF THE SCALE ARE NOTES THAT CANNOT BE HEARD BY THE HUMAN EAR... AS SOMETIMES USED BY BIRDS AS SIGNALS OF WARNING..."

"HOW ELSE DO WHALES, MILES APART, DIVE SIMULTANEOUSLY AT AN APPROACHING SHIP? SAILORS KNOW... THE VIBRATIONS GO THROUGH A SHIP LIKE A BASS ORGAN NOTE SOUNDED IN A CHURCH!"



"AS WITH SOUNDS, SO WITH COLORS... AT EACH END OF THE SPECTRUM CHEMISTS CAN DETECT 'ACTINIC' RAYS-- COLORS AN IMPERFECT INSTRUMENT LIKE THE HUMAN EYE CANNOT DISCERN... I'M NOT *MAD*-- THERE ARE COLORS WE CANNOT SEE!"

"... AND, LORD HELP ME, THE DAMNED THING IS SUCH A COLOR!"



HARKER, THIS WHOLE THING'S TOO BIG A STRAIN ON YOUR WRITER'S IMAGINATION! YOU LET THAT CRAZY MAN'S DIARY UPSET YOU... NOTHING MORE HAPPENED TO MORGAN THAN HE GOT DONE IN BY A MOUNTAIN LION!



SURE LOOKED LIKE A MOUNTAIN LION'S WORK TO ME!

RIGHT! ONLY MYSTERY IS WHY THE WITNESS AIN'T IN AN ASYLUM!



VERY WELL IF YOU'RE DONE INSULTING ME, I'LL GO!

MAYBE WHEN YOU GET BACK TO THE CITY, HARKER, YOU CAN WRITE THAT TESTIMONY DOWN... MAKE A RIGHT GOOD STORY!



WITH THE INTRUDER FROM THE CITY GONE AND THEIR DUTY DONE, THE MEN FILED OUT OF THE CABIN; TALKING, JOKING... THE INQUEST HAD BEEN A FAR BIGGER DIVERSION THAN ANYONE COULD HAVE HOPED...

LAWD! WHAT A STORY! AN' CITY FOLKS THINKS WE'RE GULLIBLE!

SAY! THAT'S ODD... CAN'T SEE PART OF THE WAGON... THE GRASS! IT'S MOVING!



SUDDENLY SOMETHING WAS UPON THEM... SOFT, HEAVY, POWERFUL! ITS HORRIBLE CRIES WERE LOUD AND IT'S HOT TERRIBLE BREATH SPRAYED ON THEM...

THE THING! THE DAMNED THING!!



RELENTLESSLY THE THING ATTACKED... CLAWING, RIPPING, TEARING! THE CORNER COULD TAKE NO COMFORT IN THE FACT MORGAN'S THEORY WASN'T COMPLETELY CORRECT... HE COULD SEE COLOR OF THE THING NOW -- AS LIFE LEAKED FROM HIS BODY -- IT WAS BLOOD RED!!



TOO BAD... I GUESS THE CORNER IS PRETTY TORN UP ABOUT THE WHOLE THING! BUT IT SHOULD LEAVE YOU IN THE MOOD TO RIP INTO THE NEXT YELL-YARN...





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YEARBOOK



1967
YEARBOOK



1978
CHRISTOPHER LEE



1973
THE HUNCHBACK



1964
YEARBOOK



1968
MONSTER MAKE-UP CONTEST



1938
POWERS OF DRACULA



1974
JEXILL & HYDE



1965
YEARBOOK



1975
OUTER LIMITS



1971
SPECIAL
CONTEST ISSUE



1976
DRACULA
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MILES TO EARTH



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DR. BLOOD'S
COFFIN



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CURSE
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1942
FRANKENSTEIN
MEETS THE WOLFMAN



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"ANY OF YOU LITTLE DEMONS DOUBTERS? THINK EVEN IF WEREWOLVES AND VAMPIRES EXISTED, THEY'D PERISH IN OUR MODERN SCIENTIFIC WORLD? WELL, WHEN IT COMES TO SURVIVAL, THESE CREATURES HAVE A FEW TRICKS UP THEIR SLEEVES... IN FACT, THEY HAVE..."

A VESTED INTEREST

'NOTHER DRINK...GOTTA GET ME 'NOTHER DRINK...



WHA? THAT SCREAM!
IT...IT LOOKS LIKE
A...A...



...WEREWOLF!







SO? WHAT
WERE YOU
GONNA SHOW
ME?

I - I DON'T UNDERSTAND... IT
WAS RIGHT HERE! I SAW
THAT T-THING ATTACKING...



LISTEN... THE
WEREWOLF MUSTA
DRAGGED OFF THE
BODY! SO NOBODY'D
DISCOV...

THAT'S ENOUGH! LOOK,
STEWART, YOU RUN ALONG AN'
LAY OFF THE SAUCE! NEXT
TIME WE'LL HEAVE YOU
STRAIGHT INTO THE LOONEY
BIN!



SHOULDA KNOWN NO ONE'D BELIEVE ME! IF ONLY
I COULD PROVE IT! WHAT A STORY THAT'D
MAKE... I COULD GET MY JOB BACK
AND A FAT RAISE!



COULD PUT ME BACK IN THE BIG TIME...
MUST BE SOME WAY I CAN CONVINCE
THEM ABOUT THE WEREWOLF...

MIND IF I
JOIN YOU?



MY NAME IS ATRIA, BOB ATRIA, PLACE
IS DESERTED TONIGHT AND I ALWAYS
ENJOY HAVING SOMEONE TO TALK
WITH...

HELP YOURSELF... MAYBE YOU'LL
LISTEN! I'VE GOT THE WORLD'S
HOTTEST STORY... AND NOBODY
BELIEVES ME!





ATRIA! DON'T THINK YOU'VE GOT ME! THIS IS NO ORDINARY CAMERA! IT'S...



... A GUN LOADED WITH
SILVER BULLETS !!

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!



8-BUT I MADE IT MYSELF!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DIE...THE
BOOK SAID SO! W-WHAT...?

VERY CLEVER,
MR. STEWART.



...BUT I'VE ALSO HAD TO BE CLEVER TO SURVIVE SO LONG! YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST HUMAN TO TRY TO KILL ME WITH SILVER BULLETS, AND YOU WON'T BE THE LAST! THAT'S WHY I WEAR THIS...



...BULLET PROOF
VEST!!

УАУУУУУУУУУУУУ!



LOOKS LIKE ATRIA GOT THE **VEST** END OF THE DEAL...
POOR STEWART... HARDLY A VESTIGE LEFT! AND THERE'LL
HARDLY BE A VESTIGE LEFT OF YOUR LAST MEAL...
AFTER YOU READ MY NEXT FRANTIC ISSUE.



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